2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
FL11 Luo FL11

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while relations of a personal kind and kinship links between individuals run across their common frontiers and are compelled to do so by the exogamous rules obtaining in Luo society.

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Several of the clans and maximal lineages possess sacred spears and other objects believed to have belonged to their founders. The best known sacred spear (*tong ma lisua*, spear of sacrifice) is the *tong* Alego, the spear of Alego, the founder of the JoAlego clan. In Ugenya the JokaGer clan have several such spears and there are others in possession of the lineages descended from Cuanya to the south of the gulf. Where there are important stranger lineages in a tribe they may also have their sacred objects, e.g. in Alego the KaLuo and the JokOgelo have sacred spears and the JoAgoro have a sacred stone and a sacred pot handed down from their founders. These objects are symbols of the unity of a clan or lineage and, by extension, of the tribe or tribal segment in which it is dominant, and they were used ritually in time of war or of common calamity, such as drought and invasion by locusts. They seem generally, if not always to be held by the senior line (*dho ot ma duong*) of a lineage or clan and are kept either in a granary or in hiding in the bush. The senior line is often called on by junior collateral lines to perform important sacrifices for them and the senior lineage ought to provide the sacrificial beast at ceremonies common to all the lineages. I was told also that while each lineage had its *won gweng*, 'father of the land' the *won gweng* of the senior lineage had chief prestige among them.

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Some clans and lineages have certain ritual prohibitions (*kwer*), mostly on certain foods, particularly kidneys and liver. The Luo do not give the impression of attaching much importance to them and if a man and a woman observe the same taboo it is not in itself a bar to marriage. Reference must also be made to clan and lineage honorific, or praise, names. The *nying paak* is generally derived from the name of a paternal ancestor whose name is a lineage cognomen, e.g. Okwiri (see the chart of the JoOwila clan) can be called, according to the circumstances, *wud* (son of) KoOkelo, *wud* KaJeje, and *wud* Owila. These names are much used at communal gatherings, expecially at large beer parties.

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A feature of clanship which would seem to be of some importance is the annual inter-lineage wrestling. Unfortunately, I only became aware of these shortly before I left Luoland and had afterwards no further opportunity to enquire further into the custom, or to discover whether it is practised all over Luoland or only in some tribal areas, such as U-yoma where the closely related collateral lineages wrestle for practice prior to the wrestling matches between the big lineages. Thus the Ko-Okwiri are matched against the KoObong, then these two lineages together against the KaAtuenga and KaAbudha, and so on. The lineages send a messenger to challenge the other party and when they meet an elder presides over the joint bouts and the exhibition matches between famous wrestlers on each side. The matches are said to occasion much excitement among the spectators.

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The sketch given above of the Luo clan is only an outline delineating feature of it. A little detail is filled in here and there in the following

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
Bantu Kavirondo FL4
Nandi FL13

B 778 769

excitement would then ensue and stupendous efforts would be made to recover the cow, which rarely failed to be returned to the owner before nightfall in order to redeem the sacred stone.

L 769 778 782

The Ja-Luo do not erect altars to the spirits of their ancestors like the Bantu Kavirondo, but for all that they believe in the influence of the spirits of the departed. If a man is stricken by illness, he will make a feast at the door of his hut, and he will take small pieces of meat and throw one to each of the four quarters of the compass; he will then fill his mouth with native beer and squirt a mouthful out on the ground in different directions and finally in a similar way toss out spoonfuls of *mtama* porridge in various directions as propitiatory offerings, at the same time imploring the spirits to take the food and not to worry him.

Charms.

B 789

Charms are legion among all the Kavirondo, and like other native races (and European, too, for the matter of that), they make no attempt to explain why such and such a charm should produce a certain effect.

The Awa-Tsoso tie a feather from a white chicken on the end of a stick as a charm to keep off hail; the sticks, which are about four feet long, are planted at intervals in the fields of beans and sem-sem; some seem to pin their faith to a wisp of grass which is tied to the stick and placed among the growing crops in the same way. This was only noticed among the Eastern Tsoso people of the Koweri clan, but is probably wide spread.

B [824]

The Tiriki people suspend a ball of clay by a string which is fastened to a stick, and plant one of these in a field of sweet potatoes or ground nuts to prevent thieving; the ball of clay has one of the yellow fruit of the common wild *Solanum* stuck into it.

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The use of this combination of the fruit of the Solanum and clay, as a charm for good, seems to be rather widespread, for at the close of the Nandi campaign of 1900 when the chiefs were making overtures for peace, they brought to the Government station a native stool on which was a conical mass of moist red clay which rather reminded one of a child's mud pie; this was studded all over with the yellow Solanum fruit, and was said to be great peace medicine.

B 751

In some parts of Bantu Kavirondo, an old earthenware cooking pot will often be seen fixed as a finial on the point of one of the natives conical huts. This is a charm to prevent the children becoming cross eyed, for it is said children, when quite babies, are often stricken with a disease of the eyes which leaves a chronic squint; the charm does not render them immune to the disease, but averts the after effects; this belief occurs among many tribes in Bantu Africa, and the same charm is used.

B 824 778

Among charms we may perhaps mention that curious tree the *Ekirikiti* or, as it is called in Kavirondo, the *Murembe* tree (*Erythrina tomentosa*) which is remarkable both for its brilliant red flowers, and from the fact that it bears its leaves and flowers at different seasons.

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have been more common in South Kavirondo whither the cult had spread and had been received with enthusiasm.

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The priests started " schools " which they usually placed on hill-tops, and in the best proselytising traditions, attracted potential adherents by giving feasts of their slaughtered cattle. They also built here and there what might be called groves or places for the worship of Mumbo where sacrifices were made to the accompaniment of many obscenities and dancing.

In some of these Groves were wooden idols, one of which has been presented to the Natural History Museum by Mr. C. M. Dobbs, late Provincial Commissioner for Nyanza Province. This practice of constructing sacred Groves to Mumbo and erecting idols is interesting since all the people who were questioned about this cult said definitely that such things had never been commanded by Mumbo himself. True, he had said that there were to be sacrifices made to him with dancing to the accompaniment of drums and bull-roarers (without musical accompaniment), but he meant them to take place in each boma. No instructions had been given for groves or idols.

An extract from the report of the District Officer who found the idol is worth inserting at this point:—

" . . . .The meeting place of the cult consisted of a beautifully swept enclosure adjoining the High Priest's Boma and capable of seating some two hundred people. From the next boma to that of the High Priest ran a made path, four feet wide and trenched at the sides . . . . The enclosure was surrounded by a well-built dry stone wall. In the centre was a little semi-open hut about six feet in diameter, finished with white mud . . . . There was no door, it appeared symmetrical all round, thus:—

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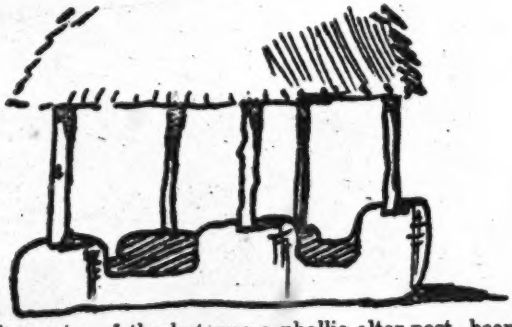

" In the centre of the hut was a phallic altar-post, bearing traces of blood-stains . . . . The High Priest's daughter produced some unpleasant animal relics from a hole in the wall in the enclosure. In the Western corner a bush plant (Nyaluthkoth) had been planted. . . .

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In the Eastern corner was a small length of inner wall covered with dry grass, from which a shrub was growing so as to leave a covered but hollow space between the walls."

795 The altar-post mentioned in the report and which is now in the
778 Museum, is a piece of wood standing some 3½ to 4 feet high and about
5 or 6 inches in diameter. One end has been carved with the result
231 that it appears to be an unmistakeable phallus. That this is intentional, however, has been strongly denied by all those questioned about it, and, from the manner of my informants, I am inclined to believe that what they say is true—as far as it goes, and for the following reasons. In every Luo boma the cattle are tied up at night to wooden posts embedded in the ground. Each beast as a rule has
[531] a post—called in Dholuo, "Loch,"—to itself. Where the owner of the boma has an exceptionally fine bullock he marks it out for distinction by putting a metal bell—not unlike a Swiss cattle-bell—round it's neck and further he carves it an especially ornamental Loch. This carving is almost invariably phallic in shape, and I expect that the idol in the Museum was probably a loch uprooted from a nearby boma.

795 The point which was stressed to me was that although nearly all
778 carved Loches appear to be undeniably phallic, yet this is entirely accidental and has no intended sexual symbolism or meaning whatsoever. It was just the custom to carve them thus.

174 Now I am prepared to believe that the phallic appearance of these
831 Loches is produced unconsciously and without sexual significance, but, considering the geographical origin of the Luo and further the nature of the Mumbo beliefs, I consider that it is more than probable that the Loches in their present-day domestic capacity are the unconscious relics of phallic cults and practices handed down from unremembered antiquity, and have by now lost all their former phallic meaning. That they have been seized on as symbols in this religion is not surprising when one considers firstly their probable origin, which I have just indicated, and secondly the fact that the gospel of Mumboism in its promises of plenty without having to work for it (the phallus always having been the symbol of Fertility and Plenty) is typical of all phallic religions. If their choice of a phallus for a symbol is not an unconscious re-emergence of long forgotten rites, then it is an extremely interesting instinctive gesture that their choice of emblem should coincide with that of other and unconnected races who held parallel beliefs.

795 It would seem then that Mumboism is a mixture of the old Luo
174 religion of sun worship, and of an even older religion, long forgotten in the mists of Time and now reappearing in a new guise.

795 The prophesies of Mumbo having failed, the cult is dying out,
797 especially in Central Kavirondo, though it appears to be rather more tenacious in South Kavirondo. Further, active discouragement by the Government and the work of the Missions will soon banish it

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

less as titular owner of the whole herd. The scheme of division may be represented as in the diagram below. All other livestock is divided in the same way. The eldest son of the first wife must marry before any other sons can do so, and if the first wife has no sons the rest must wait till there is no further chance of her bearing any. When the first wife dies, the second wife becomes chief wife of the homestead, but a first wife's full status can only be succeeded to when she is replaced by a sister and a new homestead is built. The property of a barren wife is inherited by a stepson who is adopted into her household to do the man's work in it.

CATTLE HERD

All herded together

Head of homestead titular owner of all

1. *Cattle of the* abila
Strict property of homestead head.

Used to help sons or brothers' sons to marry, or to marry new wives for homestead head.

Residue ultimately inherited by the youngest son of the homestead, who also takes the father's share of cattle from any subsequent marriages of sisters.

All derived from the heifer and bull taken by the father at every daughter's marriage, and from their increase.

Milk from these used by the homestead head.

Cattle of the wives' houses
Most to *mikayi*, next to *nyachira*, rest among *rero* wives.

2. Cattle strictly property of the wives.

Ultimately inherited by youngest son of each house.

All derived from the heifer called *rach kede* received by the mother at each daughter's marriage, and from the heifer of *ataka* and bull settled upon a wife by her father at the end of her marriage ceremonies.

Milk from these used by the wives.

3. Cattle held for sons' marriages.

Any residue inherited by youngest son of each house.

All derived from the cattle received at daughters' marriages other than those specified under 1 and 2.

Homestead head has over all discretion in the original division of accruing cattle, and can persuade wives to give up cattle from category 3 to help stepsons to marry, and may by agreement take an extra heifer from those received at a daughter's marriage, to complete the bridewealth of one of his other wives.

Succession to authority in the family, and also in the lineage, depends on a combination of three qualifications: primogeniture, personal suitability in character and wealth, and appointment by one's predecessor. Primogeniture is highly regarded and preferred, but is never an absolute rule. Whenever an eldest son is unsuitable, or another agnatic relative is clearly more suitable, the latter is chosen to succeed. But a successor must be named by his predecessor, and as a result of the strong common sentiments in family and lineage segment, the predecessor's appointee seems usually to have been the one whom the elders of the group wish to elect when they meet at the funeral of the predecessor to confirm his choice.

Ancestor worship is falling into abeyance among the Luo of today. All those who go to school become at least nominal Christians, and this affects most of the young, while the old are becoming diffident in the performance of rites which no longer command universal respect. The spirit shrines which used to be placed between the first and second wives' huts are hardly seen today, nor the three stones which used to stand before the spirit shrine, with the stone of sacrifice buried beneath (see

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

diagram, p. 17). It is therefore difficult to give a precise account of the relation between ancestor worship and lineage formation. It is noteworthy, however, that the ritual formula at a sacrifice was not spoken by any particular descendant of the recipient of sacrifice, but by any elders of his lineage present, who repeated it in turn while waiting for the sacrificial bull to urinate or excrete. If it refused to do this it was rejected and another substituted, and it was the elder who was repeating the formula at the moment when the bull urinated or excreted who had to make the sacrifice. The usual formula was *wuorwa, luong' wuoru uchiemo*—'our father, call your father and eat'—followed by the bidding of a blessing on the particular matter in hand. In the funeral ritual more emphasis seems to be laid on insulating the living from the ill will of the dead than on securing the status of the latter in the other world. Similarly at any sacrifice, ancestors called to share are bidden to give the blessings for which they are asked on pain of being jeered at and despised. Children may be named, according to the father's judgement, after various circumstances or persons linked with the child's birth or ascertained in dreams. But if the child cries unusually the diviner (*ajuoga*) is called to discover which ancestor is seeking to have the child named after it. In this way the child may be named after its own father or mother, or any other relative, male or female. The same group of names tends to occur frequently in converging lines of ascent, especially those of famous ancestors, which are repeated particularly often, but there is no regular belief in the necessary reincarnation of ancestors in alternate generations.

IV. LINEAGE CONCEPTS

THE special terms which the Luo use for lineages show the distinctions which they make between different aspects of the activity of these groups. Frequently all these terms may be applied to the same group on different occasions depending on the context. The most important of these terms are *dhoot, gweng', libamba*, and *anyuola*. *Gweng'* and *dhoot* are used of class A segments only, *anyuola* of class B segments only, and *libamba* may be used of either. The use of these terms is always logical when interpreted in relation to the structural position of the speaker, but their etymology does not always seem consistent with this unless it is understood in a symbolic sense. It may be best to give a general account of the usage and etymology of each one, followed by some quotations from informants.

Dhoot (pl. *dhondi*) is used for all those lineages which are corporate landholding units. They are the lineages already referred to as class A. Some idea of the variations in their size and population is given in the figures included in Figs. 1 and 2, and the maps (Figs. 3, 4, and 5). They carry general social functions. Each manages its political, jural, economic, ritual, and other affairs through a council of elders representing its major segments and recognizing one of their number as leader. Organized on a territorial basis, they are the units of primary settlement or multiples of them,[1] responsible for the acquisition, apportionment, and use of land. They are the basis of a whole series of corporate group activities ranging from

[1] By settlement I mean simply a defined area of territory, containing the dwellings and all the land resources of a specified social group. The Luo have no villages in the sense of recognized aggregations of dwellings larger than those of the family.

[text continues on p. 27]